# The Student Press

The Student News of Singapore International School (Hong Kong)

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*One-Year Anniversary*

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News

## School Commences SG60 Celebrations with Hamper and Cheque Presentation Ceremony

Community Hamper and Cheque Presentation Ceremony | All pictures on this page courtesy of SISHK Communications

**By EMMA FANG and CYRUS LEUNG**
Editors-In-Chief

On January 16, the school and representatives from sixty charity organisations across Hong Kong gathered in the Lim Kai Auditorium for the Hamper and Cheque Presentation Ceremony, the very first of our SG60 initiatives at SISHK.

Thorough preparations were made prior to the event. Following a call for contributions in early December, donations from SISHK parents, SIS Foundation, and the Zhong Guo Long Charity Foundation reached a grand total of over $700,000 and enabled a sum of $12,000 to be given to each charity organisation. In the days leading up to the ceremony, students and teacher volunteers dedicated hours packing hampers each consisting of sixty bottles of pineapple cookies—treats that symbolise reunion and good fortune in Singaporean culture—generously sponsored by The Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong.

Presentation of Special Token of Appreciation (School Valued Partners): *from left to right,* Mr. Ho Kai-Ming, Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare; Mr. Ong Siew Gay, Consul General of Singapore in Hong Kong; Mr. Liu Chee Ming, Chairman Board of Governors; Mr. Thomas Lee, founder of Zhong Guo Long Charity Foundation; Ms. Agnes Ma, Director of Marketing and Communications at The Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong; Ms. Pamela Yoong, SISHK Principal.

Ella Du, a student leader who took part in the ceremony, reflected, "I think this event offered a valuable window for student leaders to learn more about the operations of charities, empowering students to make an impact and give back to the wider community."

"The ceremony was a unique experience," said Jasper Koo, another student leader. "I've never seen our school pull off such an impactful event before! As a member of the Community Council, I am thrilled to witness our school actively helping people in need all across Hong Kong."

Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare Mr. Ho Kai-Ming and Principal Ms. Yoong present donation to Hong Kong Volunteer Power Limited

The year 2025 marks sixty years of independence for Singapore as a nation, and an opportunity to reflect on Singapore's journey over the past decades and work towards building a brighter future together. As the only Singapore-style international school in Hong Kong, SISHK will be commemorating this anniversary with a year-round series of SG60 initiatives and events with the aim of giving back to the Hong Kong community that has been integral for the school's journey, as well as celebrating the shared values that unite and define us as a school.

"SG60 also serves as an opportunity for the Singaporean community to show our love and appreciation for [Hong Kong]," added Mr. Ong Siew Gay, Consul General of Singapore in Hong Kong. "I am very happy to see SISHK take this initiative this morning, in line with our SG60 themes of resilience and openness."

The Hamper and Cheque Presentation Ceremony, as the first step in these initiatives, exemplifies SISHK's commitment to giving back to the wider society and embodies the spirit of generosity and service that lies at the heart of the school's values. It demonstrates the power of collective effort and active contribution—in big ways or small—in making a difference, and leaves the school eager for the many SG60 celebrations that are yet to come.

Reception

In his address, Mr. Liu Chee Ming, Chairman Board of Governors of the school, said, "I think we are not just one small village called Singapore; I think we are helping to unite two very dynamic cities called Hong Kong and Singapore. We hope we will bring the next generation to become global citizens and leaders, and with kindness in our hearts and with the right values, and hopefully we will have a better world."

Feature

# Inside the Battle of the Books Club: Goals, Highlights, and More

Battle of the Books Team Captains via Ms. Laura Hill

**By EMMA FANG and CYRUS LEUNG** Editors-In-Chief

As one of the most long-standing English language-centred CCAs at SISHK, Battle of the Books is a school team that competes against other schools in HK Battle of the Books and aims to foster a school-wide love for reading, helmed by student Captains Nicole Lee, Emma Zhang, Charlotte Fung, Lucas Kooi, Emily Choi, and Jadan Choi.

We interviewed Ms. Mary-Julia Lam and Mr. Daryl Walker, the teachers-in-charge of the club.

**Could you provide a brief introduction to the Battle of the Books CCA?**
When I first joined SISHK four years ago, I noticed that there needed to be an English club in our secondary section (yes, there wasn't one!). With my experience in hosting and training for Battle of the Books, I saw an opportunity to promote a love for English reading and provide students with the chance to run a club together. I started with a small group of Secondary 2 students, some of whom are now DP1 Captains, who showed strong dedication to sharing and learning. These Captains have been instrumental in planning and training our Battle of the Books team. Our CCA is more than just a club; it functions as a competitive school team that participates against other IB and international schools in Hong Kong.

**What is your vision for the CCA this year?**
My vision for this year's Battle of the Books team is to further ignite a passion for English reading among students while offering opportunities for leadership development. We aim to strengthen our team by providing more comprehensive training sessions and expanding our collaboration with other IB and international schools in Hong Kong. This will enhance our competitive edge in Battle of the Books competitions and foster personal growth and a deeper appreciation for English literature among our members. Additionally, we strive to create a supportive community where students can develop their leadership skills and build meaningful connections with peers from different schools. Please note that the official HK BoB has age restrictions for participation, so I want to provide senior students who have experience in the competitions with opportunities to take the lead and carry on their passion for BoB.

**Could you share some highlights from the weekly CCA sessions?**
Each week, Mr. Walker and I meet and collaborate with our DP Captains to plan activities and develop materials for our sessions. As part of their leadership development, these Captains brief our upper secondary leaders to ensure the training sessions are well-prepared. During our weekly meetings, Captains and leaders take the lead in training and practising with team members. Our sessions include a mix of team activities and games geared towards preparing for the HK Battle of the Books competitions, as well as quiet and group reading sessions. After each training session, Captains and leaders engage in reflections with Mr. Walker and me to continually improve our approach. Additionally, we sometimes invite authors for talks and host bonding sessions with senior students from other schools to enrich our reading activities.

# St John Szeto from Secondary One Shares Christmas Community Service Experience

**By EMMA FANG** Editor-In-Chief

St John (Left) volunteering at Dignity Kitchen via St John Szeto

This winter break, I had the chance to volunteer at Dignity Kitchen in Mong Kok, Hong Kong. This inspiring social enterprise, founded in Singapore in 2010, is a multi-award-winning initiative that empowers persons with disabilities and the disadvantaged by providing them with sustainable, gainful employment through food services.

While my task was simple—packing and serving rice boxes for the elderly poor—the experience left a deep impression on me. As I handed out the rice boxes, I saw the smiles and gratitude of the elderly. It wasn't just about the food; it was the dignity of being served with care and respect that brought them joy.

I also observed how Dignity Kitchen maintains high standards of food safety and hygiene, ensuring that every meal meets professional standards. This taught me about the importance of responsibility and integrity in any work we do. The team's dedication, including many members with disabilities, demonstrated remarkable resilience and highlighted how challenges can be transformed into strengths with the right support.

Reflecting on this experience, I realized how harmony and care can transform lives, even in small ways. By connecting with people from different walks of life, I learned to respect their journeys and appreciate the values of teamwork and community.

This half-day of service reminded me of the importance of giving back. Organizations like Dignity Kitchen show how a simple meal can bring dignity and hope to those who need it most. I hope my experience encourages others to take part in similar meaningful activities.

**What inspired you to volunteer at Dignity Kitchen during your winter break? How did you come across this opportunity?**
I came across this experience from my father's recommendation to the Dignity Mama Founder. My curiosity inspired me to find out the abilities of those who are disabled. I wanted to build friendships with individuals who have disabilities and demonstrate to others that they are kind-hearted and valuable members of our community.

**What do you consider your biggest takeaway from this experience?**
My biggest takeaway from this experience is that you should view all as equal, not disabled, just differently abled.

Sports

# PE Week Promotes Fitness and House Spirits

**By SARAH WONG**

The PE Department hosted an exciting PE Week themed around the Olympics from January 10 to January 17, 2025. Students participated in various events, including badminton, archery, fitness challenge, and table tennis.

The week culminated in Marshall, Raffles, and LKY emerging victorious and tied for first place with fifty points, with Said placing fourth with twenty points.

News

Students Participating in Vertical Marathon Cheryl Lee for The Student Press

# Students Climb Together to Give Back at Vertical Marathon

**By NATHAN LIN, JOSHUA SIM and ETON NG**

The Community Council held its much-anticipated annual Vertical Marathon on January 10. As always, the event did not fail to impress and raised a whopping $42,000 that went to three charities: World Vision—which focuses on tackling poverty to improve the lives of children; Hong Kong Dog Rescue—dedicated to saving dogs around Hong Kong; and Mother's Choice—which supports pregnant teenagers and children without families.

We had the opportunity to interview Crystal Chan, president of the Community Council, to gather insights and highlights regarding this year's Vertical Marathon.

**What was the overall atmosphere like?**
It was vibrant and energetic. Students were filled with enthusiasm throughout the event whereas the Heads of Houses were incredibly motivating, encouraging, and supportive. Their involvement added to the uplifting spirit which made this event truly memorable.

**What aspects of organizing this year's VM did you find most enjoyable?**
One of the highlights organizing this event was the opportunity to collaborate closely with the three charities. Working alongside my dedicated Community Council members made the planning process enjoyable. I also enjoyed working with the AV committee to ensure the sound system and music worked created a lively ambiance.

# Houses Deliver Musical Spectacles at Annual House Dance

**By SARAH WONG and JAYMEE LO**

House Dance Mark Yu for The Student Press

The long-awaited House Dance took place on December 19, getting the festive season underway just in time for Christmas break.

Marshall kicked off with the animated Disney classic *Moana*, and Raffles followed with *Mamma Mia*!, bringing its iconic ABBA hits and feel-good charm. LKY then took a more bittersweet turn with their heartfelt rendition of *La La Land*. Said closed on a high note and delivered a show-stopping finale with the musical hit *The Greatest Showman*, keeping their streak alive and clinching victory yet again.

"I think House Dance was a ridiculously large success for Marshall," said Jonathan Kwong, Head of House of Marshall. "Second place felt like an afterthought compared to the relief from the months of tedious planning and dedication fleshed out into a flawless execution by the Marshall members."

Jonathan then remarked on the house's concerted effort. "From the relentless effort from choreographers like Sara and Adeline to create and teach the dances to all grades, to the house reps for chasing their house members to rehearsal venues, to call this whole endeavour anything less than a huge success would be an understatement."

# Annual Box of Hope Donation Event

**By THEA CHAN**

Boxes Donated by Students Mark Yu for The Student Press

The Community Council returned with the Box of Hope Christmas donation event, a charity initiative that aimed to bring joy to underprivileged children in Hong Kong and the wider Asia region. Students participated by bringing boxes filled with items listed on the sticker labels handed out by teachers. Donations were open from November 11 to 19, 2024.

We interviewed Ms. Ang Hwee Lin and Mr. Adrian Chan, teachers-in-charge of the Community Council.

**Could you share with us the results of this year's Box of Hope event?**
This year, we are proud to report the collection of approximately 132 boxes, a testament to the generosity and community spirit that defines our school.

**The Box of Hope charity project has been organised by the Community Council and the school for many years. How has this event helped bring the SISHK community together over the years?**
The Box of Hope (BOH) initiative has become an integral part of the SISHK experience, particularly for Secondary School students transitioning from the Primary School section. While participation in this program is now optional, it encourages both students and teachers to express their true compassion and support for those in need.

During Term 1, the Community Council students led the planning and organization of the Box of Hope campaign. This annual charity project focuses on providing meaningful gifts to underprivileged children in Hong Kong and across Asia during the Christmas season.

The campaign also aims to engage more Secondary students, fostering a sense of community service and enhancing their understanding of the Community Council's mission.

# Green Day Raises Environmental Awareness On Campus

By TORY NGAI

On January 15, Green Club hosted its first Green Day, bringing students together to both enjoy themselves and strengthen their environmental awareness. The event featured the Endangered Animal Exhibition, green sale, and various game booths.

"I think Green Day was overall a success," reflected Nicole Lee, president of Green Club. "What was previously known as Green Week had been reduced to Green Day, so we had to cut out a lot of popular activities such as Masterchef and Green Debate. Thankfully, we had a lot of students and even teachers engage in our games and exhibition booth."

"I'm also really thankful for the community's support for the green sale," she added. "All funds raised were sent to the WWF snow leopard animal protection scheme."

# Chinese Culture Week Ushers In Chinese New Year

By SOPHIA YU

From January 20 to 24, Chinese Culture Connection hosted the Chinese Culture Week, themed around the twenty-four solar terms. The week saw a variety of events, including the Guess the Song competition where teachers sang popular Chinese songs and sparked enthusiastic participation from the houses.

The festivities continued with a bustling Chinese New Year market during lunch, a standout favourite among students that offered an assortment of traditional Chinese accessories and snacks. On the Chinese Costume Day at the end of the week, the community embraced Chinese tradition in a spirited atmosphere as students and teachers alike donned Chinese traditional attire.

Zelan Zhang, president of the Chinese Culture Connection, said, "We're all thrilled to see students rushing to visit our CNY market, where the tanghulu and stuffed toy snakes were especially favored, symbolizing good wishes for the year of the snake."

Chinese New Year Market Mark Yu for The Student Press

Looking ahead, Zelan said, "Next year, we plan to keep inviting primary students to enjoy our market and game booths. We will further expand the scale of our event, while improving crowd management and event logistics."

# Winter Ball Returns

By RYAN LI

The Student Council held their annual Winter Ball on January 17, themed "The Great Gatsby" this year.

"I found Winter Ball to be a great success," said Valerie Ong, a student performer. "Performing at Winter ball was a truly amazing experience, and I look forward to watching next year's performances!" Daniel Lau, an executive member of Student Council, expressed his appreciation for the event as well: "I think the event was incredibly successful and had a fantastic vibe. The planning behind the scenes was all worth it."

# Happy New Year of Snake: Chinese New Year Celebrations

By SOPHIA YU

Dragon and Lion Dance Mark Yu for The Student Press

On January 24, the annual Chinese New Year Celebrations was held and brought the school together in a grand display of Chinese cultures and traditions. The many performances were meticulously planned and rehearsed months earlier and delighted the audience.

The student emcees' opening paved the way for the first performances of the afternoon: the highly-anticipated teacher's dragon dance that was met with thunderous applause from the students, and the lion dance performed by the Hong Kong Ngai Wan Dragon Lion Dance Team, both iconic performances believed to usher in good fortune and chase away evil spirits. The lion dancers, dressed in elaborate costumes, leapt across the stage accompanied by the beats of drums, cymbals, and gongs, making a lively start to the celebrations.

Talented students then took the stage with a Chinese dance performance and Chinese poem recitations. A highlight was the Chinese fashion show, directed by student Angela Jiang, where students and teachers dazzled in qipaos and hanfus.

"I am very honoured to have performed in the CNY Celebrations," said Jennifer Mao, who took part in the Chinese dance performance. "Preparing for the event was a special experience for me, and I think the other performers would agree as well."

Winter Ball Mark Yu for The Student Press

Arts

# Muzé Brings *Wicked* to the Stage

**By THEA CHAN, SARAH WONG and EMMA FANG**

*Wicked* Musical via SISHK Communications

*Wicked*, Muzé's year production, was staged on December 14 to a packed house.

A long-running Broadway smash hit, *Wicked* has risen to become a cultural phenomenon with the release of its movie counterpart in 2024. Based on the 1995 novel by Gregory Maguire, *Wicked* is a prequel to the famed The Wizard of Oz and tells the story of Elphaba, a young woman misunderstood because of her green skin, and her unlikely yet profound friendship with Glinda, a student eager for popularity. After encountering the Wizard of Oz, their relationship reaches a turning point as their lives begin to diverge. The main cast included Alyssa Jiang as Elphaba, Shann Tan as Glinda, Ryu Leong as Fiyero, Sean Lam as the Wizard, and Trooper Liu as Madame Morrible.

"The musical was a lot of effort, but I'm so proud of all our cast and my dear executive team because I think it turned out super fire!" exclaimed Shann Tan. "We've had twenty-five rehearsals over the span of three months and after every rehearsal, I felt like dying of exhaustion, but it was worth it because I could not have asked for a better result. Best musical ever. Muzé on top!"

Alyssa Jiang said, "*Wicked* has been the most incredible performance I've ever been in, and the journey from the start to the end was nothing but memorable. I'm super grateful that I could experience playing my favorite Broadway musical character, but I couldn't have gotten there without everyone beside me. To me, the musical was a masterpiece and a tremendous success. I'm sure the audience would agree, that we managed to really bring out the stories of each character and that we managed to give them some of the wonder and thrill that we experienced ourselves this whole time."

Wicked Musical via SISHK Communications

Together with its no less well-received prelude, Wicked Days, held from October 31 to November 1, Muzé's *Wicked* production raised a total of $28,533 for the Christina Noble Children's Foundation.

News

# School Hosts Family Fiesta

**By RENEE LEE and CYRUS LEUNG**

Despite the colder weather, the campus atmosphere warmed with festive joy as students, parents, and alumni filled the air with chatter during the Annual Family Fiesta on November 30. It was a hallmark of family celebration and an inclusive, interconnected community at SISHK, featuring vibrant events such as the secondary Winter Concert, Santa photo booth, and food markets hosted by the SISHK Parent Teacher Association.

For most secondary students and various leadership groups, the focal point of the Family Fiesta was the leadership booths. Booths were tentatively set up much before the Family Fiesta, brightening the school campus with a combination of student passion and a DIY twang. Taking place on the 4/F plaza, student leaders from all grades worked together to host various events that showcased their speciality and role within the school community, exemplifying the student-led culture at SISHK.

When interviewed about the event, Ashley Cheng, co-vice president of the Audio Visual committee, shared her thoughts, "I think it went really well, given that our goal with Family Fiesta was mainly to show those who didn't really know what AV actually does or what it's about. I definitely think we accomplished that, and the game exceeded our expectations in popularity. It was also really fun and cute to see kids trying out our memory game." She concluded with heartfelt gratitude, "We couldn't have done it without all our members who chose to take time out of their day to help us run the booth, so really, it was a joint effort."

Students and Parents Participating in Family Fiesta Mark Yu for The Student Press


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